

Fire Information – Elbow Pass Complex

August 25, 2012 10:00 AM

Incident Team: Lewis & Clark Forest Type 3 IMT (Colby/Inabnit)

Cause: Lightning

Acres: 19,753 acres

Containment 0%

Resources: 1 Wildland Fire Module, 2 helicopters

Total Personnel: 35

Contact: Glenda Scott 562-3791

The Elbow Pass Complex is comprised of five different lightning ignitions from July 12 through July 31. These four fires have merged into one fire, the Elbow Pass Complex: Triple Divide Fire, Rapid Creek Fire, Elbow Pass Fire, and Bar Creek Fire. The fires are generally located 25 miles west southwest of Augusta, Montana. The Falls Point fire is south of the Complex. All are located in inaccessible terrain in heavy fuels. The fires are in the Bob Marshall and Scapegoat Wilderness Areas and are on three national forests.

The Elbow Pass Complex is currently 19,619 acres; Acres burned: 15,994 acres on the Lewis & Clark National Forest, 3,308 acres on the Flathead National Forest, and 317 acres on the Lolo National Forest. Additionally, 205 acres has burned on the Falls Point fire on the Lolo National Forest.

The fire area is situated in a mosaic of past burns and has spread into Cigarette Rock fire (2006), Bunyan Point fire (2000), Canyon Creek fire (1988) and South Fork Burn (2003, 2011). Fire behavior changes when it spreads into these old burns due to the changing fuel conditions.

Yesterday's Activities: Strong winds prevented helicopter reconnaissance into the Elbow complex. MODIS mapping, based on high elevation imagery, showed heat and limited spread in the Green Fork area, on the northwest edge of the fire, and the southwest part of the fire. There was increased smoke seen rising from the Dry Fork of the Sun River in the early evening. The Wildland Fire Module continued clearing the trail into Green Fork cabin and removing the fire protective wrap. Falls Creek fire was observed from helicopter reconnaissance from the Wedge Fire; there is some smoke seen from the north edge.

Today's Planned Activities: Today's main activities will be to restore the batteries at Sugarloaf repeater site and aerial reconnaissance of the fire. This will provide a good assessment of fire activity from yesterday's wind event. Fire activity can increase where ground shrubs have started curing from nighttime frosts, and where the fire approaches bug killed timber. The Wildland Fire Module will continue clearing downed snags on the trail to Green Fork. All three lookouts are staffed. Fire managers will provide initial attack if requested by the Forest or adjacent Forests.

Recreation Opportunities: While the Benchmark Road is open, the area is closed beginning a half mile west of the road. Numerous trails remain closed. Please check with local offices for specific recreation information. Please note that vehicles parked at the trailhead could be at fire risk due to possible future fire activity. The Benchmark Air Strip is closed, the Augusta air strip is open.

For more information on these or other wildland fires, and related information visit:

www.inciweb.org or call:

Augusta Information Station 406-562-3247

Choteau District Office 406-466-5341

Seeley Lake Ranger District 406-677-2233

Spotted Bear Ranger District 406-758-5376